

# Understanding Transportation Enhancements

## Legislation

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) established the Transportation Enhancements program in 1991. ISTEA requires states to set-aside 10% of their Surface Transportation Program funds specifically for Transportation Enhancements. Subsequent federal legislation reauthorized the Transportation Enhancements program in 1998 and 2005.

### **Legislation Authorizing Transportation Enhancements**

**ISTEA** – *Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act*, enacted December 18, 1991

**TEA-21** – *Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, enacted June 9, 1998

**SAFETEA-LU** – *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users*, enacted August 10, 2005

## Provisions of the Program

The Federal Highway Administration, the agency responsible for interpreting the legislation, has established specific provisions of the program. A Transportation Enhancements project must meet one or more of the designated eligible activities. A project must be related to surface transportation and provide public access. Transportation Enhancements funds may not be used for military or aviation related projects. Transportation Enhancements funds may not be used for routine maintenance or standard environmental mitigation.

As with other federal-aid funding, the Transportation Enhancements program is a reimbursement program, not a grant program. Generally, states administer Transportation Enhancements programs on a project-by-project basis.

### **Surface Transportation:**

All elements of the intermodal transportation system, exclusive of aviation. For the purposes of TE eligibility, surface transportation includes water as surface transportation and includes as eligible activities related features such as canals, lighthouses, and docks or piers connecting to ferry operations, as long as the proposed enhancement otherwise meets the basic eligibility criteria. - source: FHWA website, <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te/overview.htm>

## Matching Funds

Since 2002, DelDOT uses a sliding scale to determine the required contribution from the project sponsor. The sliding scale method enables even small towns and organizations to afford to take advantage of the Transportation Enhancements program to improve their communities.

Project sponsors are encouraged to think creatively when raising funds for the match obligation. Sponsors can use private cash from non-profit organizations; this may include local non-profits or national foundations that offer grants. Any state funds are eligible to be applied to the match. Federal dollars, other than federal DOT funds, may be applied. Local funds, such as municipal dollars, Community Transportation Funds, and other monies available to local authorities may be utilized to meet the match obligation. Finally, services in-kind, such as inspection services supplied by the local municipality, may be counted towards the required match.

## Further Resources

For further information on the Transportation Enhancements Program, please visit the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse website.